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SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/UN REFORM: DUTCH WILL PLAY IMPORTANT ROLE IN REFORM DEBATE

REF: A. STATE 11141

B. STATE 21394

Classified By: Political Counselor Andrew Schofer for reasons 1.4 (b) a  
nd (d)

**¶1.** (C) SUMMARY: The Dutch are encouraging EU partners to remain flexible on the issue of UN reform in the run-up to the 2005 UNGA, according to Karel van Kesteren (MFA, UN Director) and his deputy, Pieter Ramaer. The Dutch have come around to the view that a Democracy Caucus in UN fora could be useful in expanding debate, encouraging fresh thinking, and facilitating the formation of effective coalitions. Van Kesteren said he was surprised that the U.S. was not more active with regard to the UNSC expansion debate, considering that a Council as large as 24 could result in an ineffective body or one in which the U.S. wielded much less influence. On the budget, the Dutch are concerned about regularizing the sources of financing, which they now view as chaotic. End Summary

#### DUTCH HOPE TO AVOID PREMATURE EU POSITION ON REFORM

**¶2.** (C) Poloff met Karel van Kesteren and his deputy, Pieter Ramaer on February 4 to discuss US and Dutch perspectives on UN reform during the run-up to the September 2005 UNGA. Van Kesteren confirmed that the Dutch plan to play an active role on this issue, particularly given the Dutch PermRep's role as a facilitator for the Millennium Review Summit and the fact that PM Balkenende is one of the 15 Heads of Government on the Mexico's "group of friends for the reform of the UN." Van Kesteren stressed, however, that the Dutch are currently advocating in EU counsels that the EU avoid agreeing a common position on the reform agenda now. The Dutch argue that taking this approach would allow Member States more creativity in brainstorming and participating in preparatory meetings at the UN. The Dutch MFA in The Hague has given latitude to the Mission in New York as it engages in preparatory meetings, he added. Van Kesteren worried, however, that the whole reform debate was dominated by the "New York mafia" and stressed that a way should be found to break the issue free. Poloff explained how the USG sometimes engages a targeted audience in specific capitals at crucial points in UN debates and asked how the EU operates in this regard. Kesteren agreed that this could be one way for the EU and the Netherlands to approach the issue both in New York and overseas.

#### DEMOCRACY CAUCUS - THINKING OUTSIDE THE BLOC

**¶3.** (C) Having overcome initial resistance to the idea of a Democracy Caucus, the Dutch now see it as one form -- but certainly not the only one -- in which to advance the UN agenda in concert with the United States and other like-minded countries, van Kesteren said. Like President Bush, the Dutch recognize a global movement toward democracy, which has been a core element of Dutch development policy for some time. In general, the Dutch see the benefit of meeting in a format that crosses the borders of the five formal UN regional groups, not least because it encourages outside-the-bloc thinking. Looking ahead to the preparatory process for the 60th UNGA, the Dutch seek inclusive formulas to involve countries like Egypt and India up front. PermReps from such countries will be instrumental in bringing their own New York staffs, as well as their home ministries, along in a constructive manner in the reform debate, van Kesteren recognized.

#### SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM

**¶4.** (C) The Dutch fear a dynamic that will result in considerable UNSC expansion at the expense of effectiveness, van Kesteren said. He admitted to being under the impression that the USG was taking a "surprisingly laid back approach" to this debate considering that a "Council of 24 would dilute America's influence" and the decision making dynamics. "A weakened UNSC does not make a stronger UN," he said, adding with some disdain, "We do not want to make the UNSC more like ECOSOC." The Dutch watch the G4 debate with interest, he said. Adding that he saw the point of those arguing for one EU seat to replace Britain, France, and any other EU aspirant (Germany, Italy), he admitted this outcome was not likely in this latest round of reform discussions.

BUDGET

**15.** (C) The Dutch give the budget issue less priority than the issue of UN financing, which they view as "chaotic, unstable, and unpredictable," hence worthy of more serious consideration. The interplay of assessed contributions, peacekeeping contributions, and voluntary contributions does not serve the larger purposes of the UN, van Kesteren argued, pointing for example to the contradiction between international obligations to care for refugees and the fact that the UN's refugee programs are funded in large part by voluntary, vice assessed, contributions.

**16.** (C) With some caveats, the Dutch basically agree with the points we have raised (reftel a) in criticism of the Millennium Report, van Kesteren recalled, but for the USG rejection of a focus on increasing the levels of ODA. Development needs both an increase in ODA and an increase in the capital flows the USG prefers to emphasize, he argued. He agreed on the need for interested UN Member States to work together in major capitals of developing countries to continue promoting the benefits of funding besides ODA.

**17.** (U) Dutch reaction to the points in reftel B (on the High Level Panel) will follow septel.

**18.** (U) BIONOTE: Karel van Kesteren has been appointed as the next Dutch Ambassador to Tanzania, a post he will take up this summer. His replacement is K.P Rade, currently Dutch Ambassador to Nicaragua.

SOBEL